

ChildFund
Timor Leste

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023



ChildFund Timor-Leste is the representative office of ChildFund Australia – an independent international development organisation that works to reduce poverty for children in developing communities. ChildFund Australia is a member of the ChildFund Alliance – a global network of 11 organisations that assists almost 36 million children and families in 70 countries.

ChildFund Australia is a registered charity, a member of the Australian Council for International Development, and fully accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which manages the Australian Government's overseas aid program.

ChildFund began work in Timor-Leste in 1990, originally under the management of ChildFund International. Since October 2017 it has operated as an office of ChildFund Australia and works in partnership to create community and systems change which enables vulnerable children and young people, in all their diversity, to assert and realise their rights.

ChildFund Timor-Leste is working with rural communities to build a new, stable, and prosperous future for what is one of the world's youngest nations.

ChildFund Timor-Leste

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A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR

In 2022-23, Timor Leste celebrated 20 years of independence. As the youngest nation in Asia, a prosperous future for Timor-Leste is dependent on its ability to unleash the potential of its children and young people.

To support this, ChildFund Timor-Leste continues to work in partnership with local organisations, community leaders, young people, and the government of Timor-Leste to address the unique needs of children.

We are supporting access to education for all children. In the past year, this included strengthening literacy in primary schools and community-led preschools in remote areas. Community school management committees learnt about school management and resource mobilisation. We also supported training for volunteer tutors in the preschool curriculum, classroom management, and play-based learning. These tutors are doing amazing work to support children's education. To ensure more children can access these opportunities, we continued to advocate for strategic investment in early childhood education nationally and provided recommendations to the Ministry of Education during the development of a new preschool law.

We are supporting young people through strengthening youth-led organisations and working with them to foster a positive self-image, healthy relationships, critical thinking, and many other important life skills to help them make responsible decisions for themselves and those around them. This year we established a new partnership with the Alumni Association of the Youth Parliament to implement a ChildFund flagship program, Swipe Safe, which supports young people to safely make the most of their online world. In this program, we are working with young people, parents and child protection workers.

Next to our ongoing youth changemakers program in Lautem, we launched a new project in Liquica with a grant awarded by the European Union to focus on youth-led peace education in schools and youth clubs. This new project will bring together young people and traditional leaders in communities to strengthen cultural conflict resolution mechanisms, and find ways to

make these mechanisms more inclusive of youth and women's voices.

Our maternal and child health project continues to strengthen and expand. This year, the project was implemented in several new communities in Lautem and Manatuto. ChildFund, together with local partner Alola Foundation and community health centres, trained health volunteers and established mother support groups and male engagement forums. These community health volunteers are providing essential health information and support to pregnant women, mothers, and young children.

This year was the final year of our birth registration project, which has helped to register nearly 40,000 children. We worked with UNICEF and the Ministry of Justice to raise awareness in communities on the importance of registering births, as well as organised mobile birth registration drives in the remote villages of Elmera, Bobonaro and Oecusse.

As climate change increasingly impacts the livelihoods of parents and families in Timor-Leste, our disaster risk reduction project supported communities to implement their action plans to prepare for disasters such as drought and flooding. This included supporting in the rehabilitation of water sources and systems, tree planting and promoting climate-smart agriculture through farmer field schools.

We are thankful for the support of all our donors and the collaboration of our partners, including national and local civil society organisations, government partners, youth organisations, and community volunteers. Together, we can make sure children and young people in Timor-Leste are safe, healthy, and can participate in their communities and build a better future.

ERINE DIJKSTRA
COUNTRY DIRECTOR



7,855

PEOPLE REACHED



3,259

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE REACHED



6

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

2

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING PROJECTS

2

EDUCATION PROJECTS

1

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION PROJECT

1

HEALTH PROJECT

OUR IMPACT

Young people learning how to swipe safe

With just a swipe or a tap of a finger on an electronic device, children can open so many doors into the digital world. However, with plenty of possibilities, there are also risks. Young people may be targeted by scams, experience bullying, or be exposed to sexual, racist, or other inappropriate content.

“ChildFund Timor-Leste is very proud to be partnered with APFTL,” said Erine Dijkstra, ChildFund Timor-Leste’s Country Director.

“We have worked with 26 facilitators already to provide the online safety training.”

In 2023, ChildFund Timor-Leste partnered with local youth organisation, Alumni Parlamentu Foinsae (APFTL), to implement Swipe Safe, a program that helps young people stay safe online.

Laura (pictured right) is 17 and from the Lautem municipality, she is one of thousands of young people in Timor-Leste learning how to swipe safe. Laura is looking forward to learning how to stay safe in the digital world.

“I’m very excited to take part in the online safety training because it will help us to use technology wisely and teach us how to protect ourselves from online danger,” she said. “I want to use social media carefully and correctly.”

Grilo, a school principal and a representative of the Ministry of Education in Lautem, said it was important for young people to access digital technologies safely to learn, develop, and connect. “I encourage all students and young people to participate in the online safety training and use what they learn in their daily lives,” he said. ChildFund Timor-Leste and APFTL are aiming to reach 5,000 young people and 1,000 parents in Lautem and Dili municipalities through the project.



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I am very excited to take part in the online training because it will help us to use technology wisely.

Laura, 17

Supporting communities to rehabilitate water systems for safe childhoods

Long and dangerous journeys to collect clean water were part of daily life for children in a small, rural village in Lautem municipality, Timor-Leste. They would make two-hour round trips, twice a day, pushing a wooden cart through rugged terrain to collect water from a stream for drinking, cleaning and cooking.

Mother-of-eight and kindergarten teacher, Carolina, said the process of collecting water had impacted the wellbeing and education of children. “We made sure they were safe and always held their hand, but the trips were risky,” she said.

Multiple trips a day meant children were exposed to a greater risk of harm and had less time to play and study. Having tired themselves out from collecting water, they sometimes fell asleep before eating dinner.

ChildFund Timor-Leste and local partner Fraterna worked with Carolina’s community to help make water more accessible to families. Under the guidance of the village chief, Filipe da Cruz, a new water system that was more reliable and closer to the village was installed. The whole community was involved in the construction. “We had a lot of people helping,” Filipe said. “I divided them into two groups of about 50 people. They helped with the construction and prepared food for the volunteers.”

The new and improved system brings clean water to 34 homes – approximately 200 people – and the local school. It is helping families like Carolina’s cook food, shower, wash their clothes, and give water to their farm animals. With clean water now nearby, children in the community have more time to focus on their education and playtime.

The water rehabilitation project was part of the Disaster Risk Reduction Community Action Plan, an initiative led by the community.

The new and improved water system brings clean water to 34 homes – approximately 200 people – and the local school.



Better nutrition for a healthy childhood

In the mountainous countryside of eastern Timor-Leste, several hours from the country’s capital Dili, there is a village that is extremely poor and so remote that families living there need to walk almost three hours just to reach the nearest health facility.

For two-year-old Ana and her family, it is home. They live in a household of 17 people, who are together surviving on less than several dollars a week. For a long time Ana’s diet consisted of mostly porridge made from rice and water, and she became malnourished.

A severe worm infection worsened Ana’s condition. Her mother, Maria, noticed that Ana was losing her appetite and that she had stomach pains and diarrhoea. Eventually, Ana stopped eating and began losing the already little energy and strength that she had.

Maria was extremely worried about Ana, and called on a community health volunteer in the village for help. “I was so afraid when I saw Ana didn’t want to eat,” Maria said.

The community health volunteer, trained through ChildFund Timor-Leste’s health and nutrition program, immediately referred Ana to be treated for malnutrition.

Ana received medication to treat her worm infection and was placed in a supplementary feeding program supported by ChildFund where she received nutritious food. Eventually, Ana became stronger and her health improved.

ChildFund Timor-Leste and local partner Alola Foundation are training community health volunteers to help treat and prevent child malnutrition. These volunteers also learn how to identify common childhood illnesses and make referrals to health specialists.

2,087

PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH OUR HEALTH PROJECT.

Fighting to save lives in rural communities

Atina (pictured right, wearing green) is a sole parent to five children living in a remote community in Lautem municipality, Timor-Leste. Remarkably, Atina has also been a ChildFund Timor-Leste community health volunteer in her village for many years – that’s on top of being a full-time, sole parent.

When she isn’t working as a community health volunteer, she takes care of her children and runs the family farm. She isn’t afraid to defy gender roles – working in the fields of her family farm to grow healthy food she can feed her children.

Atina received basic maternal and child health care training through ChildFund Timor-Leste and local partners to prepare for her role as a community health volunteer.

Often, Atina is the only person able to help women in her community access maternal and post-natal health care. Few families can afford their own vehicle, and public transport to the nearest health facility – 22km away – passes through the village only once a day.

“I help young mothers have a safe delivery by getting them to the community health centre nearby,” Atina said. “I am not trained in home births, but I have had to help one emergency case.”

A few years ago, Atina heard one young woman, Octa, in her village, had gone into labour. Atina rushed to Octa’s home to see how she could help. When she examined her, she saw that Octa was very close to giving birth.

Atina called for an ambulance, but none were available. She had to rely on the basic health care training she’d received from ChildFund to guide her through the birth. Atina steadied herself and told Octa to push. Soon after, a healthy baby girl named Bella was born.

Atina also encourages and supports mothers to attend postnatal and antenatal care, and leads mother and father support groups. She also empowers new mothers with the knowledge and resources to access routine vaccinations for their children and helps to facilitate cooking, nutrition and health workshops for families.

“Atina is a very dedicated woman and if it weren’t for her, I couldn’t do all of this,” Octa said. “My daughter, Bella, is now six years old and is a student at the local primary school.”

Atina said: “I love helping my community understand basic health. I love to see that there are more people bringing their children to the health centre for checkups and routine vaccinations compared to past years.”



“

I love to see that there are more people bringing their children to the health centre for check-ups and routine vaccinations compared to past years.

Atina, community health volunteer,
Lautem Municipality

2,628

CHILDREN REACHED THROUGH OUR EDUCATION PROJECTS.

Supporting children with a good start to life

Belita (pictured below) is a facilitator with more than 10 years of experience teaching at her local community preschool in Lautem municipality.

An ordinary day for Belita involves storytelling and teaching basic literacy and numeracy. "I really love working with children and teaching them all these things," she said.

Teaching is Belita's passion, but for several years she was out of a job – the only school in her village shut down when a program supporting community-based preschools in Timor-Leste came to a halt.

Young children in the community missed formative years of education, hindering their learning process and readiness for school.

ChildFund Timor-Leste worked with local partners, including INFORDEPE, to restart the program and rehabilitate the infrastructure at Belita's school, including building toilets and a kitchen. Young children in Belita's community are now back in school, and Belita is teaching again. With ChildFund's support, Belita and other facilitators also learnt how to make lessons more fun and engaging, and how to support children with disabilities.

"Through training sessions, we learnt about children's development, how to play with the children, how to create curriculums and manage our classrooms," Belita said. "Lots of parents are now bringing their children to school. I have grown a lot from the trainings ChildFund and INFORDEPE provided to increase our skills, especially in teaching."

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Belita, Preschool facilitator, Lautem Municipality

COLLABORATING TO ACHIEVE CHANGE

Thank you to the following organisations and individuals whose generous support and assistance is vital to the work of ChildFund Timor-Leste:



- Alola Foundation • Alumni Parlamentu Foinsa'e Timor-Leste (APFTL) • Ba Futuru • Belun • INFORDEPE (Nat'l Training Institute for Teachers and Educ Prof Timor-Leste) • Insitituto para a Defeza dos Direitu da Crianca (INDICCA)
- Juventude Dezenvolvimento National (JDN) • Mary Mackillop Today • National Health Institute (INS) • ONG Fraterna
- Plan International Timor Leste • Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO) • UNICEF

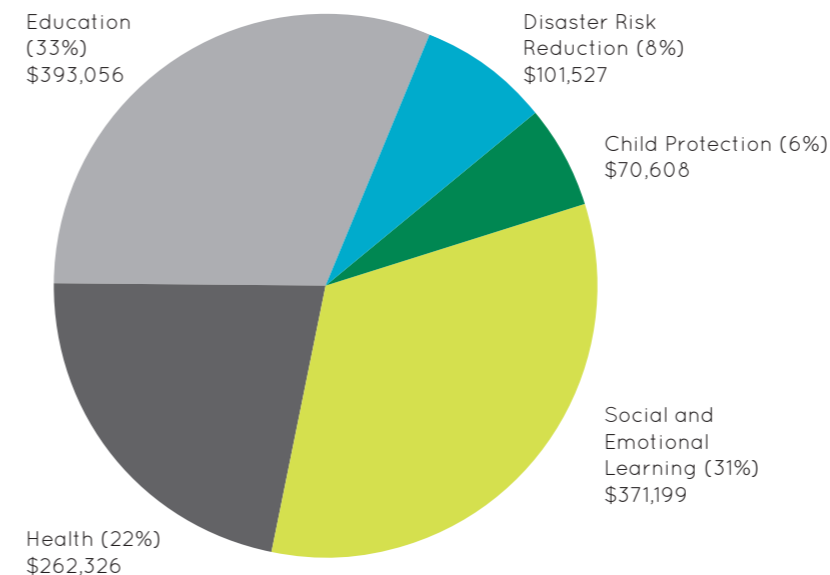
ChildFund Timor-Leste would also like to thank the Timor-Leste Government for its support.

Financial report for year ended 30 June 2023

REVENUE	FY 21-22 (USD)	FY 22-23 (USD)
Donations	375,262	281,402
Grants	1,339,348	1,120,119
Other income	0	21,847
Total income	1,714,610	1,423,368

EXPENDITURE	FY 21-22 (USD)	FY 22-23 (USD)
Program and projects	1,462,424	1,198,716
Program support	67,406	46,291
Accountability and administration	200,778	244,815
Total expenditure	1,730,608	1,489,822

PROGRAM EXPENDITURE FY 22-23 (USD)



**BECAUSE
EVERY CHILD
NEEDS A
CHILDHOOD**

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